red flag and its lid was open; other tanks followed without flags and with guns protruding from their turrets. We cut our way through the crowds and heards whistles and boos about us—the people did not know what to think of our line of tanks. In front of the Tauride Palace we were met with shouts: "Long live the revolution!" A wide passage opened in front of the column and the tanks disappeared one after the other into the courtyard of the palace; only two stopped before the entrance, with guns turned to the street. With a roar of insults and threats the mob receded, clearing a space of about twenty yards before the colonnade.

It was 4:00 P.M. when Chkheidze received a new wire from the Fifth Army: "Preparations completed. The task force is boarding the trains. The first echelon is leaving. Vilenkin." We decided to keep the message secret. Premature disclosure might precipitate the attack. Furthermore, we were not sure our troops would not be stopped by rioting regiments or saboteurs.

The joint session of Executive Committees was resumed. The Communists seemed uncertain of themselves. They had reached the point at which the only further step was open violence—invasion of the Tauride Palace, arrest or murder of the most hated leaders of the Executive Committee. The momentum of the movement was pushing the mob in that direction, but the leaders feared the reaction at the front, in provincial Soviets, and among the peasants. Certainly they would have had no inhibition against throwing the mob against the Marinsky Palace and the "Minister-Capitalists," but the latter were not a party to the clash. The contest for power was between the Communists and the moderate Socialists.

During the session of the Executive Committee I was called to the telephone time and again. Something new was in the air. The spokesman of a regiment asked me nonchalantly about the situation around the Tauride Palace. I replied that he knew the answer without asking me. "That is not what I meant," he said. "Is it true you are bringing front troops to Petrograd?"

"This is true," I answered. "Our echelons are on their way."

He replied casually, "That's okay with us. Our regiment is neutral. All arms have been returned to the arsenal."

About 5:00 P.M. the Kronstadt sailors approached the Tauride Palace. Chernov, Trotsky, and I went to meet them. I recognized the Yakor Plaza mob, with drunks in the front row. The sailors were in a frenzy after a triumphant march through the city, punctuated by looting and shots at windows. Trotsky addressed them: "You are the flower and glory of the revolution!" During his speech a group of men surrounded Chernov and tried to push him into a car, shouting, "Take power, you s.o.b., when you are offered it!" Separated from Chernov, I